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◆ **Introduction:
Mapping Hispanism**

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In the context of current debates on postcolonialism and multiculturalism, a collective reflection on *ideologies of hispanism* seems to be in order. And yet, this is a daunting task, given the ambiguities and complexities involved both in the mere definition of the topic and in the demarcation of its theoretical and epistemological boundaries. Indeed, the extension and transformation of cultural and ideological practices associated with Hispanism suggest the impossibility of confining the analysis to a specific period or modality. It indicates the need to explore, from multidisciplinary and transnational perspectives, the various ways in which Hispanism has functioned as a dominating political force, as an interpretive and representational cultural model, and as an epistemological paradigm, throughout the entire development of Spanish America's and Spain's cultural histories.

At the same time, the topic points to the disciplinary level in which the different perspectives on Hispanism articulate. Within Spanish, Latin American, and U.S. academies, disciplines constitute localizing spaces for the appropriation, legitimization, and institutionalization of Hispanism, as well as sites from which the global dissemination of knowledge related to this field is actually implemented. A collective reflection on the *ideologies of hispanism* entails, then,

the examination of the intertwined connections between power, cultural institutions, and cultural production, as well as an analysis of the changing role played by writers and scholars in the production of critical discourse related to the categories of colonialism, national formation, modernity, and identity politics that constitute the basis of the post-colonial debate.

Without a doubt, the project of hispanization evokes, in the first place, the historical experience of imperial expansion in the so-called New World, and the strategies of resistance implemented by the colonial subject in order to counteract the violence of material and symbolic domination. The array of problems associated with what Aníbal Quijano has called the *coloniality of power* are inextricably related to linguistic colonization, that is, to the imposition and dissemination of the predominant imperial language for the purposes of control and submission of dominated cultures, the reduction of differences, and the symbolic appropriation of autochthonous imaginaries. Intertwined with the project of Christianization, as well as with the overarching purposes of economic profit and political legitimization, the Spanish language became, from the first stages of colonization, one of the most refined and versatile technologies of power in America.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the consolidation of Castilian hegemony over all other cultural identities also indicates the crucial role of enforced monolingualism in the projects of political unification and cultural dissemination of imperial Spain within its own primary territories. But far from being limited to the period of imperial expansion, the project and practices of hispanization have also played a key role in the postcolonial scene, both in Spain and Spanish America, throughout the process of the formation and consolidation of national states, and nowadays in the context of globalization.

Over the centuries, the Spanish language has constituted, both in Spain and in Spanish America, a distinct space for symbolic struggle, for the construction of collective memories and subjectivities, and for the perpetuation of a cultural and economic linkage between the old metropolis and the former colonies. The transnational impact of Hispanism can also be traced at the academic level, in the disciplinary fields associated with the transmission of Spain's cultural heritage or with the study of cultures derived from the Spanish conquest. Factors as diverse as the rapid expansion of the Spanish language, particularly in the United States, the focus on social and cultural migrations promoted in the framework of postcolonial and cultural studies, and the articulation of Spain to the European Community, have considerably contributed to increasing the attention on Hispanism, from different perspectives, and to reinvigorating

transnational debates about its political content, cultural value, and political significance.

The use of language both as a pragmatic and a symbolic device of domination—as well as a key element of cultural resistance—is one of the most important issues studied in this book. In the Spanish American colonies, *translation* is not only the main procedure for transculturation but also is one of the most important recourses for the appropriation and subjugation of subaltern imagination. Lydia Fossa analyzes in this volume the manipulation of linguistic codes in the Andean region, and the uses of hispanization—and latinization—as political procedures implemented for the reduction of cultural differences. The *invincible ignorance* of the Indians and members of colonial *castas* was the final frontier conquered by European epistemologies. For this reason, colonial domination depended, to a great extent, on the proliferation of communicative strategies designed to complement, and often to replace, linguistic colonization. Fossa's study shows that Hispanization was often confronted with the challenge of going well beyond the limits of the language, which became only one of the elements of the complex and effective cultural semiosis that accompanied imperial domination in America. The use of interpreters, iconography, and performances for the transmission of religious dogma, the adoption of teaching techniques differentially applied to children and adults as well as to members of different social strata, the construction of dictionaries, glossaries, and grammatical treatises that transformed Quechua and Aymara into linguistic oddities even in their own cultural realm, and the elimination in these books of all cultural and linguistic components considered superfluous to the purposes of pragmatic appropriations of indigenous cultures, were some of the strategies used for the implementation of the paradoxical “evangelization without language” that, as Fossa indicates, took place in America during the sixteenth century.

With the advancement and consolidation of colonialism, the Spanish language was also crucial to the organization and transmission of a *creole archive* that would define the cultural parameters of a new, emerging American elite which, in spite of its subaltern position to Peninsular sectors, would claim the right to re-discover, register, and interpret pre-Hispanic cultures as part of the process of the “invention of traditions” initiated by Spanish missionaries and men of letters soon after the “discovery.” But the recovery and interpretation of indigenous cultures that survived the dismantling processes of the conquest and colonization of America was a project that also found its way in the new Spanish American republics, playing an important and, at times, contradictory role in the articulation of national discourses. Ignacio M. Sánchez-Prado analyzes

the rediscovery of pre-Hispanic cultures carried out in Mexico by Miguel León Portilla, as well as his loose utilization of archival materials, and the operations of cultural and linguistic translation used for the construction of an indigenous past that could be productively integrated into the conflictive realm of modern Mexican culture. Within this framework, Hispanism constitutes the institution-alizing and legitimizing space for a nationalist appropriation of pre-Columbian history. The Spanish language is defended by León Portilla as the unifying and cohesive force—the *lingua franca*—that could articulate and bring together all the components of Mexican diversity. Sánchez Prado's study poses the question of the limits and merits of transcultural appropriations (use of historic sources, textualization of oral discourses, translation of indigenous languages into dominant codes), indicative of the epistemological violence inherent in the interpretation and representation of subaltern cultures in postcolonial scenarios.

The discursive and ideological reappropriation of the past has been an obsessive pursuit in modern historiography. As Joan Ramón Resina indicates, the territorial loss that resulted from Spanish American independence is strategically compensated during the nineteenth century by the gradual promotion of a trans-Atlantic *Hispanic* culture articulated around the congregant power of the language, and the communion of customs and beliefs.

The manipulation of social memory and, as Resina reminds us, the *fabrication of oblivion*, is thus one of the main dispositions of modernity. The construction of knowledge in the specific field of Hispanism had its point of departure in the universalistic and ahistorical concept of *Hispania* as a spacial and temporal extension of what once was Spain's imperial dominion. The suppression of diversity and particularism, and the repression of all references to the colonial origins of the concept, has promoted Hispanism as a program of cultural and linguistic dissemination in modern times. As Resina indicates, *historical violence* is codified as *symbolic violence*, and the superior value of tradition absorbs all the political connotations of the historical concept.

In spite of the fact that, as Nicolas Shumway rightfully indicates, many of Spanish America's "enlightened" liberators—particularly Simón Bolívar—considered the "Spanish legacy an impediment to be overcome rather than embraced," in Latin America nationalism included the components of Spanish language and Christian religion as unifying forces for the homogenization of diverse and conflictive populations strongly rooted in their own indigenous traditions, and for the construction of consensus and citizenship in the new Republics. It is also true that the role then played by Hispanism was certainly articulated with—and often limited by—the forces of progress and political change. The dazzling effect of new cultural models (i.e., France, Northern Europe, the United States) gradu-

ally overshadowed most vestiges of the old Empire, which was seen by liberal leaders of the nineteenth century as a declining, retrograde and peripheral nation within the much more promising realm of Western modernity.

As an ideologically charged cultural practice, Hispanism produced different results and managed to define very diverse political agendas, depending on the project to which it was articulated, the international conjuncture in which it was immersed, and the goals pursued by intellectual sectors connected to its discursive field, both in the Peninsula and abroad. Yet the colonial past, and the ways in which history was recovered and interpreted from different political perspectives over the centuries, has always been the most conflictive and enduring issue in these debates.

The ideological tensions which characterized the cultural relations between Spain and the Americas from the beginning, manifested new and often contradictory political dimensions during the twentieth century, in response to the challenges posed by the transformations that were taking place in the international arena.

The development of Hispanism reached one of its most notorious and productive stages with the Spanish exile, which brought a large diaspora of scholars and writers who would be crucial to the dissemination of Spanish culture in the Americas across the Atlantic Ocean in the 1930s and 1940s. Sebastiaan Faber's study focuses on the underlying ideological tensions that dwell within the concept of Hispanism, and identifies three major events that contributed to the international re-definition of this field: the Spanish Civil War, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and consequent U.S.-sponsored Pan-Americanism, and World War II, after which the Americas were perceived by many as the only repository of Western civilization. While some of the movements emerging from those events were directly linked to fascism, others were embedded in the cultural and "spiritual" mission to disseminate the Spanish culture in both North and Latin America, particularly at the academic level. Faber's article illustrates the redefinitions and transformations of Hispanism in three journals founded in Mexico City between 1938 and 1940 (*Revista Iberoamericana*, *Romance*, and *España Peregrina*). Based on the study of these publications, his essay focuses on some of the contradictions that are inherent to the field. Among other things, Faber mentions that "in spite of Hispanism's transnational ambitions, it is simply too tied up with cultural nationalism," and that the idea of Hispanic studies proposes, to a large extent, the assimilation of heterogeneous cultural realities. Multicultural studies could be, according to Faber, a way of counteracting the rigid, expansionist, and homogenizing orientation of most traditional Hispanic studies.

During some of the processes that I have described thus far, cultural politics has often invoked the linguistic realm as a space for encounter and communion, while in other cases language has been emphasized as one of the most sophisticated and efficient tools used in the project of effacing cultural differences and consolidating political supremacy. Nevertheless, monolingualism has always been, in fact, at the core of Spain's hegemonic projects, both within its Peninsular territories and abroad. Thomas Harrington's article analyzes the terms in which Castilian supremacy was constructed, established, and perpetuated in Spain, over Basque, Galician, and Catalan cultural identities. Harrington traces the cultural process of the standardization of Spanish as part of a political project initiated in the late-Medieval period, which included a definition of the "nation" equalized to the affirmation of Castilian exceptionality and superiority with respect to both non-Christian populations and all other cultures, such as, according to Nebrija, "vizcainos, navarros, franceses, italianos, y todos los otros que tienen algún trato y conversación con España" (Biscayans, Navarrese, French, Italians, and all others who have dealings and are conversants with Spain). Joan Ramón Resina also makes reference to this supposedly self-constitutive foundation of Hispanism, which assumed since the Middle Ages the superiority and "intrinsic universality" of the Castilian language as a point of departure for the definition of a "spiritual" and, without a doubt, political mission of cultural dissemination.

Several articles included in this volume focus on the disciplinary and academic aspects of Hispanism, not only as a field related to the teaching of the language—in this respect, closely connected to the cultural and educational market—but also as a space for the study of history and cultural production. Anthony Cascardi's contribution resides primarily in the analysis of several key moments that can be identified in the development of Spanish literary and cultural studies and proposes some ways in which traditional perspectives on Hispanic literature could be refurbished, both critically and theoretically. Based on his *critique* of both Américo Castro's existential and vitalistic historicism and José Antonio Maravall's political and cultural perspective, Cascardi elaborates on the theoretical avenues opened by the Althusserian notions of ideology, interpellation, and subject formation, and offers the examples of *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, and Cervantes' *Don Quixote* to illuminate the idea of a "fractured mimesis" in Imperial Spain, and to shed light on the often overlooked interconnection between discursive strategies and institutional structures in canonical literary works.

The essays included in this book are not only concerned with the revision of disciplinary aspects related to the field of Hispanism, but are also penetrated by many of the issues and theoretical problems currently debated with respect

to identity politics, collective subjectivity, and multiculturalism. In some cases, the authors of these articles have chosen to focus on specific topics where the tensions of aesthetic and ideological representation are particularly evident. Among them, the category of magic realism and the readings of Spanish American Baroque and Neo-Baroque that have been, for several decades, at the center of critical debates.

Sylvia Molloy's article takes into consideration the specificity of Latin American history and culture, in order to illuminate what she calls "a discomfort, an ideological blind spot in the construction of 'Latin America' by the U.S. academy and by the public at large." In particular, she makes reference to the homogenizing postcolonial model elaborated mainly by intellectuals located at American universities, and to the application of exoticizing critical categories generally used to evaluate Latin American literary production. Molloy focuses on the reception of magic realism in the United States, as a prominent example of reductionist interpretations which often disregard the theoretical, critical, and political density of this and other Latin American representational strategies, thus preventing the possibility of a productive and non-stereotypical integration of Latin American cultural practices in transnational debates.

The speculative essay offered by Alberto Moreiras focuses on what Carlos Rincón has called "the returns of the Baroque" and on the attention given to this model by critics such as John Beverley and Roberto González Echevarría. Following Spinoza's concept of "sad passion," Moreiras defines academic practices in the U.S. as a self-dominating, localizing, disciplining, and anti-political passion, and wonders if there is "an exteriority to university discourse." He also refers to Hispanism as an epistemic "site of expropriation" with respect to a slippery object of study that can neither be totally captured by critical practice, nor fully resist its partial appropriation. As an identitarian expression of the Hispanic experience of modernity, the Baroque—and the Neo-Baroque—have become fields of theoretical and representational struggle and, in a way, a symbolic commodity that gives evidence of the practices of transculturation and hybridity in regional spaces of cultural production. Moreiras proposes to overcome both the view of literature "as state apparatus or hegemonic identity" and "anti-literature as a subalternist reading practice," and reflects on the possibility of an alternative form of *critique* that, by de-localizing knowledge, could allow for "a general practice of reading" that might shed new light on regional cultural and literary productions.

However, Moreiras's own critical practice of what could be defined as an intricate philosophical and self-reflective critical approach to Latin American literature is also questioned in this volume. Brad Epps' article titled "Keeping

Things Opaque: On the Reluctant Personalism of a Certain Mode of Critique” is an exhaustive attempt to explore the question of *locality*: the place from where we speak, work, and write. Yet by exploring *intellectual location*, Epps refers not only to the geopolitical or institutional place, but also to the rhetorical site of (self) production, the space of the critical or theoretical “I” often transfigured in a self-reflecting “we” that maintains an evanescent but insistent presence throughout the course of textual and/or cultural analysis. Moreiras’ personal writing style—which Epps considers “representative of a certain mode of critique”—as much as some of his elaborations around the topics of Latin Americanism (regional or not, *first* or *second*), subalternism, and the like, are articulated by Epps through an inquiry into the role of U.S. universities as privileged spaces for academic exchange and knowledge production, and as contradictory battlefields that frame—sometimes in more than one sense—our work and mark our intellectual and ideological agendas. In addition, while discussing location and locality, Epps’ article touches on the strategies of *displacement*—somehow, the exodus or *peregrinaje* alluded to by Moreiras in his essay on the Baroque, included in this volume—as a central proposition of “a nameless, groundless, radical thinking” destined to counteract what Moreiras calls the “salvaging movement” of neo-Arielist tendencies. Epps’ critique of de-localization is an attempt to recuperate an awareness of the determinations—disciplinary, as well as national and institutional—that influence our work, the disregard of which contributes to the opacity of theoretical and critical discourse.

Even with the understanding that intellectual struggles and academic conflicts within the field of Latin Americanism, Hispanism, and Peninsularism will not be resolved by the mere confrontation of individual or even representative positions and polarized agendas (universalist theorization *versus* historically and regionally-grounded critical thinking, self-reflective intellectualism *versus* experience-based critical subjectivities, academic performativity *versus* cultural and political activism, global epistemological dissemination *versus* local knowledge), the disclosure of alternative and even divergent standpoints brings to light some of the impulses that traverse disciplinary practices dealing with ideologically and politically-charged fields of study. At the same time, current emphasis on cultural studies over more traditional close readings and hermeneutical or historiographical approaches have contributed to impel methodological transformations in the field of Hispanism and to promote new disciplinary articulations that pose unseen challenges to scholars working both in Peninsular and Latin American studies. Academia is today, more than ever, a contradictory space where the production and reproduction of critical knowledge receive the impact of political, economic, and social conditions that modify pedagogical

practices and intellectual exchanges in a globalized yet strongly regionalized transnational space.

The illusion of the existence of fixed and ahistorical identities that shaped, both culturally and ideologically, the enlightened modernity where Hispanism consolidated some of its most salient ideological features, has been gradually replaced by a much more volatile, porous, temporary experience of *the social*, where *otherness*, heterogeneity, and diversity are the conspicuous protagonists of cultural exchanges and epistemological explorations. While the challenges posed by the recognition of social, political, and cultural *differences*, as well as the complex problems associated with the real implementation of democracy, are today inescapable, the tensions and inequalities that characterize the dynamics of globalization, have intensified defensiveness, discrimination, and fundamentalism, in different cultural and institutional domains around the world.

As Idelber Avelar shows in his article on “Xenophobia and Diasporic Latin Americanism,” the concept of the *foreign* is the underlying and probably most conflictive category in the vast realm of cultural studies and particularly in the field of Hispanism. The definition of the boundaries that connect the Spanish language and its *others*—such as the previously mentioned imposition of Spanish over both dominated cultural identities in the Peninsula and indigenous cultures in Latin America, besides the tense coexistence of English and Spanish in the United States—has always depended on economic and political forces, from which situations of cultural predominance emerge and perpetuate themselves, supported by legitimizing discourses and institutional arrangements in their particular domains. The notion of cultural *difference*, conceived as the unrepresentable site of *otherness* that empowers and consecrates the self-image of dominating subjectivities, is an ever-changing battlefield where ideological negotiations take place, in a balancing act that manifests not only the strength of the political powers at work, but also the vulnerability of both dominant and subaltern positions.

In the United States academy, Latin Americanism occupies an *in-between* space strongly affected by the existence of ideological and political agendas constituted as fields of symbolic struggles for the representation of Latino and Hispanic constituencies which have always existed intertwined with the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. This *in-between* locality occupied by Latin Americanism in the U.S. academy, the struggle of Latino studies to acquire recognition in this country even within the space opened by current theories on multiculturalism, identity politics, and ethnic studies, and even the most recent attempts to put forward not only the political value but also the aesthetic merits of bilingualism and hybridity have, without a doubt, managed to gain

space within the horizons of dominant cultural ideologies. Nevertheless, they have been insufficient to eradicate the notion of *foreignness* that crosses over academic practices, intellectual debates, and everyday life, as a ghostly feature of the new world order.

As Avelar indicates in his article, the destruction of the World Trade Center has radicalized the positions around the idea of *foreignness*, and made even more vulnerable all academic and critical domains dealing primarily with the diverse cultures that exist outside and within the United States. These cultures are increasingly perceived as a potential threat, and could become the target of discriminatory policies masquerading as security considerations. Avelar demonstrates how the academic practice of Hispanism is directly affected by the standards imposed at the academic level to faculty and students working in this field, and by the universalization and imposition of criteria applied to the evaluation of intellectual performance, without consideration for the diversity upon which scholarly work has always depended. Today more than ever, this imperative must be emphasized, particularly in all disciplines dealing with foreign cultures, within the context of globalization.

Closing the reflections of this volume, Román de la Campa's article on "U.S. Hispanism and Its Lines of Flight" analyzes the critical scenarios that followed the advent of deconstructive paradigms after the 1960s, particularly in the U.S. academy. The fields of Hispanism, Latin Americanism, and Latino Studies that had evoked until then distinct spaces of research and specific pedagogical practices in departments of Spanish, Modern, and Foreign Languages, have experienced radical transformations in the last few decades. De la Campa's article is an attempt to assess the disciplinary flux that characterizes current humanistic approaches to Hispanic literatures and cultures in the realm of what he has called the "discursive communities" dealing with Latin American studies. According to De la Campa, it would be impossible, in future years, to disregard the disciplinary changes that have impacted the academic world, as well as the pressures of cultural markets that have created a postnational production and consumption of knowledge in these fields. Comparative approaches will be necessary to articulate the new constellation of critical and theoretical practices that should include Latino studies as an integral part of the cultural agenda.

While several articles included in this book focus on the clarification of the origins and different stages of consolidation of Hispanism at the academic level, others elaborate on the drastic transformations that have been affecting the field, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Without a doubt, the advancement of the European Union has propelled the redefinition of Spain's international role in Europe, as well as with respect to Spanish American nations

and Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. Based on its historic nexus with Latin America, Spain is still perceived as the natural mediator for the economic rearticulation of Spanish American countries to Europe in the post-colonial era. At the same time, the rapidly growing Spanish-speaking population in the U.S. has also opened up unseen scenarios for Spain, thus renewing a trans-Oceanic connection, now with Anglo American cultures, via research programs and cultural exchange. At the economic level, the financially troubled Latin American countries have already received the impact of Spanish investments, which recognize in trans-Atlantic markets the opportunity for entrepreneurial and financial expansion within the framework of neoliberalism. Again, as Madrid places itself at the center of international arrangements, the language is reaffirmed as the primary and legitimizing vehicle for intercultural relations, and the expectation of profitable business paves the road for the re-entry of Spanish capitals in the old colonies. Even though the terms and rhetoric of the new exchanges have obviously been modified, the renovated relations between Spain and Latin America are—needless to say—still marked by the sign of economic asymmetry and cultural condescension.

Under these circumstances, the study of the variety of cultures that are connected to or exist in the periphery of the Spanish language, either in Spain or in the Americas, requires innovative trans-disciplinary and transnational approaches that take into consideration the political, social, and cultural transformation of the international arena. Within this context, it is possible to predict that the highly politicized field of Hispanic studies will maintain its legitimacy and specificity at the academic level, particularly in view of the undeniable need to maintain the study of past colonialisms as one of the main foci of academic research. Furthermore, cultures and societies of Hispanic origin continue to be located at the margins of global arrangements, a position of obvious disadvantage that provides, nevertheless, a strategic critical perspective on dominant models, and calls for a strong political and cultural agenda for mobilization and research. The same can be said with respect to communities that speak non-dominant languages both in Spain and in Spanish America, which continue the struggle to survive the effects of national colonialism, and to challenge the predominance of the Spanish language as well as the epistemological paradigms that are still being imposed upon them in order to assimilate them at theoretical, critical, and historiographical levels.

Finally, in yet another battlefield of Hispanic studies, it should be mentioned that literary and cultural studies conducted in Spanish or Portuguese in the United States and abroad are also receiving the impact of a more trendy and strongly institutionalized Latin Americanism or Peninsularism that finds in the

English language its primary vehicle for production and dissemination of theories and critical approaches on the literatures and cultures that constitute their field of study. In his polemic last article titled "Mestizaje e hibridez: el riesgo de las metáforas" (*Revista Iberoamericana*, 63/180 [1997]: 341–44) Antonio Cornejo Polar elaborated on this issue and its impact on Hispanic studies. The concerns expressed by the Peruvian critic, as well as the positions discussed in some of the responses triggered by his provocative piece, are implicitly echoed in many of the articles included in this volume. As Cornejo Polar suggested, the problem posed by the receding position of Spanish in Hispanic studies is far from being restricted to the use of the language. This fact also entails the application of epistemological paradigms created for other cultural realities, which are often forced upon Latin American and Spanish productions with little consideration for their historical, social, and cultural *differences* and, for that matter, for the subaltern position that those cultures still have in the global design. This occurs despite the fact that concepts such as difference, subalternity, and the like, constitute an integral part of current theoretical agendas that, nevertheless, frequently fail in identifying them when imbedded in their own practice and critical discourse. Non-dominant languages—indigenous and regional languages as well as Spanish and Portuguese (and the cultures they represent)—are then placed in secondary or tertiary positions with respect to English, which dominates, at least in the U.S., the scholarly production and reproduction of knowledge in the highly polemic fields of Hispanism, Peninsularism, and Latin American studies. By the same token, critical or theoretical approaches produced in languages other than English are often overlooked or ignored in transnational debates. These situations create obvious imbalances in the production of knowledge, and constitute some of the most flagrant and inexcusable contradictions affecting our field.

As we have seen, and as the articles included in this book thoroughly demonstrate, the predominance or subordination of the Spanish language and the particular ideologies embedded in the field of Hispanism are a shifting reality that varies depending on the historic, political, and cultural contexts considered in each case, and on the particular agendas to which academic practices and intellectual debates related to this field actually articulate. Far from diluting our political or professional responsibility, this position must keep us alert with respect to the forces at work in our field, the transnational parameters it involves, and the academic and pedagogical implications of our work. In my opinion, the tensions, contradictions, and paradoxes that cut across the field are precisely what keep it alive, connected to both the social communities that produce its objects of study, and the political and cultural processes that these communities

continuously challenge and reshape. I hope that this book will contribute to the understanding of our academic practices and to the strengthening of liberating political agendas connected to them.

In closing, I would like to thank the contributors of this volume for their generous and patient cooperation. This book belongs to them. Special thanks to the editors of *Hispanic Issues* for the warm encouragement they gave to this project. Finally, I am very grateful to Nicholas Spadaccini for writing the final words that close this book and open it to new, constructive debates in our field.